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State Dept. review completed

(C) MOSCOW PRESIDES AT THE BIRTH OF  
 MEXICO'S "NEW" COMMUNIST PARTY

(C) Summary

In early August, Moscow dispatched a high-level party delegation headed by Karen Brutents, deputy chief of the CPSU International Department, to Mexico to oversee the merger of the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) with four other leftwing parties. Soviet media announced but did not comment on Brutents' mission, probably to avoid crimping Moscow's good relations with Mexico's governing Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). As a result of the merger, the PRI will probably face stiffer competition from a strengthened PCM for leftist votes in the 1982 Presidential election.

\* \* \* \* \*

The PCM Emerges as a Political Force

(S/NF/NC) The PCM, Mexico's oldest political party, was legally registered only in 1978. But, as part of a four-party electoral coalition, it succeeded in polling approximately 5 percent of the total vote in the 1979 congressional elections. The 1979 results not only gave the PCM permanent status under Mexican law and a shot at the 1982 Presidential election but also piqued Moscow's interest in the party's potential as a political lever. The PRI left wing reportedly was also impressed by the PCM/coalition performance and worried that Moscow would begin funneling increased covert support to the PCM to help it siphon off PRI support among leftists, particularly in the trade unions.

(S/NF/NC/OC) In spite of the generally excellent state of Soviet-Mexican relations and Moscow's reported preference for PRI foreign policy over that of the PCM (the PCM has criticized Soviet

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policy in Poland and Afghanistan), Moscow apparently decided to take a hand in broadening the PCM constituency and strengthening its chances in the upcoming election. In August, Moscow sent the Brutents delegation, which also included a top CPSU Latin American expert, Mikhail Kudachkin, to Mexico for what the Soviet media portrayed as a simple party-to-party exchange. The mission, however, coinciding as it did with the announcement of the PCM-leftist merger, apparently was related to PCM strategy for the 1982 election.

(C) The Merger is Announced

On August 15, following almost two weeks of discussions with the Brutents delegation, representatives of the PCM, the Socialist Revolutionary Party (PSR), the Mexican Workers Party (PMT), the Mexican People's Party (PPM), and the Socialist Action and Unity Movement (MAUS) held a press conference to announce their merger into a "new revolutionary party" (subsequently named "United Party of the Mexican Left," PUIM). The merger, if and when it is actually implemented, will amount to an absorption by the PCM of the remaining four parties: because the PCM is the only one of the five that is fully registered, the other four will be subsumed under the PCM registry and will adopt PCM doctrine and strategy, thus sidestepping Mexican laws prohibiting "any change in the programs of registered parties or the transfer of registrations."

Although significant in terms of PCM electoral strategy, the move is probably less than the "historic event" claimed: MAUS and PPM are PCM splinter groups; all but the PPM have been in a coalition with the PCM since 1978; and, with the exception of the PCM, all are relatively new groups, formed only in the 1970s. A PUIM spokesman specifically denied during the press conference that the new party had been set up as "an electoral measure," stating that it would, in fact, form other alliances to "create an opposition electoral front." (A favored communist electoral tactic is to draw mass organizations into a united front.)

The unification announcement was highly critical of Mexico's present government and, implicitly, of the PRI, which has governed for over 50 years. The new party's line is that Mexico is at a crossroads: "either the conservative trends of the governing bloc are consolidated, supported by the domination of the monopolies and imperialist economic interference, or the road is opened to the aspirations of the working people...." The announced objective of the party is "the taking of power to change the capitalist society for another...."

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(S/NF/NC/OC) Soviet Media Has Little To Say

The Soviet press has been notably silent on the Brutents visit, limiting its comment to a reference to Brutents' discussions with PCM leaders on the unity of the left. Recent clandestine reporting confirms, however, that the primary purpose of the trip was to lend CPSU guidance to the merger process, which had been strongly urged by Moscow. Given the tone of the PUIM announcement and the inherent challenge to the PRI, it is hardly surprising that the Soviets are keeping the lowest of profiles to protect their currently flourishing state-to-state relationship with Mexico.

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